

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions/listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of forming an orthodontic wire, comprising, in combination, the steps of:

placing a composite of fiber and resin in a shrinkable die having a length and a top and a bottom, wherein the die is formed of a material that shrinks in response to heat;

placing the die containing the composite in a vacuum prior to completely shrinking the die;

heating the die containing the composite to completely shrink the die, wherein the composite is compressed to a pre-determined transversal cross-sectional shape, and heating occurs gradually along the length of the die, such that shrinking occurs at one of the top and the bottom prior to occurring at the other of the top and the bottom;

~~placing the die containing the composite in a vacuum prior to completely shrinking the die;~~ and

separating the composite from the die.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the die has at least one opening, and excess resin can leave the die during the step of heating the die.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 further comprising curing the composite in the die so that the composite retains the pre-determined transversal cross-sectional shape after the step of separating the composite from the die.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 further comprising a step of bending the shrinkable die containing the composite prior to the step of curing.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the pre-determined transversal cross-sectional shape of the composite is determined by the shrunk die.
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the fiber comprises a plurality of elongated strands each having a length longer than the length of the die.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the step of placing comprises pulling the plurality of strands into and through the die.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, further comprising pulling on the plurality of strands in directions towards the top of the die and towards the bottom of the die.
10. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising impregnating the plurality of strands with the resin prior to the pulling.
11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising, after the pulling, adding additional resin to the die so as to further fill the die.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the composite is placed in the die by placing the fiber in the tunnel of the die, pulling on the fibers to straighten the fibers, and thereafter adding resin in the die.
13. (Cancelled).
14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the step of bending comprises bending the die to shape the composite into an arched wire suitable for use in an orthodontic treatment.
15. – 23. (Cancelled)